

And listen how an awakened Hindu woman sings, Kamini Roy, one of our best poetesses and patriots. Such is the tune and the message of her song that multitudes are moved to tears when it is properly sung. In translation it reads:

“Come, come, my countrymen, and listen to the tale of my sweet dream and the words of my hope. The tears still linger in my eyes and yet the pain of my heart has disappeared.

“The night was dark and quiet, and I was floating on my tears. A mystic charm overpowered me, and I do not know when I fell fast asleep here for a while.

“I slept and dreamt—and I heard sacred hymns being solemnly sung on the banks of the Ganges and the Indus; and I heard the same on the banks of the Krishna and the Narmada, the Kavery and the Godavery.

“And I saw the children of the Motherland march with a divine glow in their faces. They looked powerful in unity and dignified in knowledge, and they marched as our heroic forefathers were wont to march in the heyday of our beloved Motherland.

“In the homes I saw the women fill baskets with fruits and flowers to welcome the victors; the heroic children were clapping their hands crimson; the maidens were weaving garlands for ovational sacraments and singing songs of victory in rapturous joy.”

DEMOCRACY FOR OURSELVES.

BY ALICE EDGERTON.

TO permit the intellectual classes to talk gallantly about the war and abstract democracy is like leaving the farmers to cultivate red geraniums. There is no use now in talking about the war. Whether or not it is a war for democracy is as unimportant as the question who started it. It is a war; and we all contend—or did contend before we had a war of our own—that war should end as quickly and recur as seldom as possible. But with all our loose talk and high fervor, we are working ourselves into a desire to fight to the bitterest end. Furthermore, it is a war in the name of democracy, and we have neither the institution nor the spirit of democracy. But now that democracy is the fashion, we may be able to give the word some meaning, to prepare the soil for the growth of democracy after the war.

Some of us should be denied the luxury of large talk about the patriotism and glory and sacrifice of war and be assigned to the tough task of reminding the United States that war is black. We

might well conscript a squad of humanitarians to talk the world out of war. They might not like it; it is far easier to talk war than means of bringing war to an end. But as Mr. Wilson remarked, "the nation. . . . needs each man not in the field that will most pleasure him, but in the endeavor that will best serve the common good." A sense of the failure and defeat that cause the noblest war, and the sorrow that comes with it, might encourage the formulation of a basis of peace with the least possible fighting. We should be pamphleteered and posterized with such realities as that fostered international prejudice and costly restrictions upon trade beget hostility; and that a "predisposition to war. . . . inheres in nationalism." Devices for ending wars and a desire for the ending of war are feasible, if we devote to them the time and publicity that we have devoted to the making of war. War, to be sure, is picturesque, it appeals to an instinct; but the peace task, though subtle and difficult, is not impossible. Unremitting insinuation of the peace idea, which is the international idea, into the mind of the group must produce its effect.

The same thing is true of democracy. If we choose to have democratic ideas and institutions, we can have them. But unless our intellects apply themselves to talking us into democracy, we shall be in sorry plight when our democratic bluff is called. Tomlinson himself was better prepared to come to judgment. We have said in the old days that the people—in Europe—did not want the war. "This war," said Mr. Wilson in 1916, "was brought about by rulers, not by peoples, and I thank God there is no man in America who has authority to bring on a war without the consent of the people." Perhaps in this country the people did want the war; many persons on both sides of the fence think they did not, but we do not know. But we do know that the war was not "brought about" by them; for when our turn came a referendum to the people was decried as a demand which "grazed the edge of treason." "We have seen," says the *New Republic* (April 14, 1917), "a democratic nation forced into war, in spite of the manifest indifference or reluctance of the majority of its population. . . . If the several important professional and social groups" (they who have been able to "impose their will upon a reluctant or indifferent majority") "could have voted separately on the question of war and peace, the list of college professors would probably have yielded the largest majority in favor of war, except that contained in the Social Register." In a democracy the people determine their course and the broad outlines of its administration. But we have neither the vehicle

for direct expression of the popular will nor faith in the popular will.

We have said that we were a free people, free from the secret diplomacy, the autocracy, the little compulsions of the old world. "It has been our pride," said the *New York World* editorially in 1916, "that . . . our government has never been compelled either to resort to a conscription of its citizens or employment of foreign mercenaries. . . . It is an hereditary and therefore honored tradition of the Anglo-Saxon race that exemption from extorted military service is one of the peculiar privileges of freemen." Now we are calling conscription democratic and jailing anti-conscriptionists, on the principle which we have denounced as Prussian: that democracy is "rather equality of sacrifice than self-government." The Attorney-General has asked us to do each his bit of spying in connection with the registration; we are living under the secrecies and censorships and compulsions of European autocracies. Now that the Czar is out of the running, no European ruler has power more imperial than the President's power to take this man and leave that. We used to decry a German tendency to absorb every decision of government; now with us the mark of the good citizen is unquestioning acceptance of every act of the administration. In time of stress, we say, democracy is slow and inefficient; the efficient and undemocratic Germans would take New York and annihilate New England in twenty-four hours if we were democratic and inefficient. This talk may satisfy us to-day; everybody knows that Massachusetts would like nothing so much as child labor laws if it were not for South Carolina—that we should all abide by the Golden Rule if it were not for the competition of the wicked. But when the war is over, we shall have no presentable excuse for our undemocratic ways, and battalions of political scientists should be preparing constitutional provisions that will make impossible hereafter the nullification of popular government.

Congress as an institution we have always vaunted as the palladium of representative government. But in practice we elect it, laugh at it, and forget about it. Academically we have criticized it, but we have done little either to tear it down or to build it up. In its lumbering way Congress can be used to carry through the plans of the few men in control, men frankly distrustful of democracy in the concrete. But its committee system blocks legislation and conceals responsibility. Small traffic in private interest clogs the calendars. The candor of roll calls is avoided: Congress goes in the dark its rather dull way, and when stress comes, power goes

out of it, and its duty, like ours, is to support the administration. We know, too, that many other things are undemocratic: the courts, the electoral system and the suffrage, the irresponsibility of administrative officers, the constitution, and the organization of industry. The first patriotic pleasure of the intellectuals might well be to re-mould these institutions into instruments of democracy.

But first we need to be headlined into thinking about these matters. We have applied an outer coat of democracy in this country; at heart we hardly know the feel of the thing. But democratic feeling can be developed, in time, just as war feeling has been developed. The process is slower, more delicate, but its technical instruments are the same: art, drama, school, pulpit, press. By the constant subtle processes of social control, the group will feel anything it chooses to feel. So far we have not chosen to have our youth breathe in democracy. Freedom of speech, specially curtailed just now, we have in small measure at the best of times. Tolerance, an active respect for the thought of other people, is a part of so few of us, and so little a part of us, that it vanishes in time of strain. Give us a war and every one heaps contumely upon the pacifist, while the pacifist bitterly doubts the sincerity and intelligence of those who desire war.

Still harder to ascertain, and still more important to democracy is the willingness to be as inefficient as need be. Families, industries and nations probably look tidier and get along faster if one good manager runs them. To people who like to see the rows straight, the buttons on, and no tag ends, democracy is likely to prove irritating. We need to be willing to be patient through mistake and hesitation, and find our satisfaction in the slow growth of intelligence and individuality. We need to get the feeling that self-government is more important than accomplishment and supremacy.

MISCELLANEOUS.

W. E. GRIFFIS ON WANG YANG MING.

Professor Frederick G. Henke of Allegheny College has translated *The Philosophy of Wang Yang-ming*, published by the Open Court Publishing Company. The teaching of this ancient Chinese sage is important as it represents a practical philosophy of idealism in some respects resembling Kant, and it has exercised a wholesome influence not only in China, but also in Japan and on the Asiatic world in general. It was an ardent follower of this philosophy who sent the first Japanese students to America in 1868.

The value of Mr. Henke's work may be better appreciated by the general reader from the following tribute sent to him by no less an authority than the